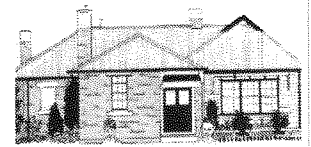


The "Huff 'n Puff" years. 1980 – 1989



In the 1980s, Carrum Primary School experienced both highs and lows. It was a decade in which much was achieved in terms of curriculum innovations and technological and structural upgrades.

Yet there were difficult times for staff, council members and the school community as a whole. For perhaps the first time in its history, Carrum faced the challenges arising from an ongoing decline in enrolments. While there were 14 classes in 1981, ten years later there were 9. This resulted in less staff and considerable planning in order to make the most of the available resources.

In 1988, the school endured a particularly difficult time as a result of the circumstances surrounding the unexpected departure of the principal.

But these challenges didn't significantly affect the Carrum kids, who were much too busy getting on with life. Anyone walking past the school gates in the morning would have seen children busily engaged in their twenty minutes of Huff 'n 'Puff activity. Sometimes the whole school was involved in a dance or aerobics exercise.

Neighbours may have heard the sound of the national anthem, as it was sung each Monday morning (or else!).

"If we didn't sing we had to mouth the words. Otherwise a teacher would tap you on the shoulder to sing. If you giggled you got pulled out of line and had to stand up the back with

the teachers. We would put the flag up the flagpole outside the voting room."

(Elissa Cooper, nee Davis)

Marching competitions were still a Friday afternoon feature, with teams forming and marching in parade style and there were games at every opportunity.

"We played elastics and we played this tiggy game. Someone would count to 10 and they would have to find you. You would run around and if you beat the person back you were safe. If they beat you and said 'I see you!', you were out." *(Elissa Cooper)*

There was inter-school sport such as football, netball, softball, basketball, cricket and, thanks to Miss O'Neil, hockey. And there were other sports and games that the Carrum children devised, or adapted from rules passed down:

"Apart from the usual footy and cricket, you would ask the teachers if you could borrow sports equipment and play bat tennis or wall ball You use your hand to pat the tennis ball against the wall. We use to play that next to the corner of the office where the little garage door is. If you went out, you had to run to the dahlias and back before someone hit you with a tennis ball. Octopus was another one. You'd start off with one person and everyone would have to run from one end to the other. If you got touched you helped the person in the middle, so it just grows and grows. And your tiggies and hide and seeks around the school."

(Ryan Parker)

Meanwhile, building and maintenance projects continued. The beginning of the decade was marked by the demolition of the girls' shelter shed—the original school building—to make way for the construction of a new toilet block in 1980. The slippery concrete steps between the infants building and the administration building had become a safety concern, so an electric disc was used to provide some traction in 1981. The following year the art room, then in rooms 8 and 9, was upgraded.

In 1982, building company S&A Markouski commenced a \$74,300 upgrade of the administration building. This was a major renovation on a building which then consisted of two classrooms, a "film room" and the main



1923 students reading their signatures found on their former classroom wall during renovations of the current administration building 60 years later.

In 1985, the state of Victoria celebrated its 150th anniversary. Carrum Primary School marked the occasion by laying down a time capsule on "Pioneer Day", November 7. The whole school dressed up and there was a pioneer parade. A pit was dug in the ground and parents prepared a pioneer meal including damper for cooking on sticks and in camp ovens. Elissa Cooper recalls

"Mum cooked damper and we had to get dressed up into olden day clothes".

1985 saw some other structural changes: the school amphitheatre was completed, a bike enclosure that could be locked during school hours was built between the two Bristols and walkways between buildings were built in the summer holidays. The gardens around the administration building were replanted. Concrete was poured for a cricket pitch and cricket nets were completed.

The school magazine *Karum Karum* was also published in 1985.

In 1986, the School Council rejected the concept of self-governing schools as outlined in "Taking Schools into the 1990s" document. Carrum became part of the Disadvantaged Schools Program, a measure aimed at developing activities between the community and school which would "redress the disadvantage of (the children's) education". This caused some anxiety.

"...many people thought the concept of DSP was saying children at Carrum were behind other kids. Once the factors that identified 'disadvantage' were presented to a public meeting, parents and teachers worked together to have new programs funded."

As a result, the school implemented a range of new programs including camping, swimming, music, a maths task centre (the featured tangram wall completed in 1991), science and computers. It received funding to purchase two Apple IIE computers and two Image writers (printers) and software.

Alana O'Neil recalls other impromptu programs and activities:

"Ross Bailey used to take his grade down to the river every few weeks on a fishing expeditions and many would return with a range of sea creatures to keep in their class tank. Sometimes they found their way to people's homes for meals."

There were activities at school that were enjoyed by all. There was Book Character Day in Book Week.

"...as we didn't have a multi-purpose room we used to make a catwalk out of tables around the library for each grade and teacher to model their favourite characters. On fine days we were outside."

Excursions at this time weren't always to exotic locations.

"(we) went to a museum, the city for a couple of times, saw a play. We went on an excursion one day to my house one day for some strange reason. We had a new cubby house out the back. We just walked there, as it is just up the road. I remember it because we just got a new garage door and it was electronic so I ran inside to grab the control so I could show everyone how it worked. I was pretty proud of that garage door back then." (Ryan Parker)

The chalkboards and carpet in rooms 9, 10 & 12 were replaced in 1986. In 1987 the shelter shed floor next to the canteen was resurfaced.

The Seaford-Carrum Area School Community developed a network consisting of five schools. Cross-age tutoring also commenced. This involved year 10 and 11 Seaford-Carrum High School students assisting primary students in class.

In August 1987 it was decided to close the canteen on Wednesday due to the inability to obtain helpers. Plastic sleeves and aprons had been provided as requested by the City of Chelsea Health department.

In 1988, the school faced a very trying year with the departure of its principal. After nine months of consolidation and consideration of the needs of the school, the School Council used a local selection process to appoint a new principal.

A consultation process involving students, parents and teachers working together to formulate discipline policies and procedures also began in this year. 1988 also saw the purchase of a new innovation called a photocopier. Work began on clearing part of the "Bristol", which had been used as a storage area.

In 1988, after 19 years at Carrum, Mr. Ron Kennett retired, ending an era. A barbecue was constructed to acknowledge his contribution. Plans were made to pave the area around the barbecue. Rum-B-Run continued, however, and there were plans to extend both Fleecy Run and fund raising activities. In 1989, a storage shed was purchased and room two converted into a multi-purpose area and ready for use in October. The drainage problems continued, with another submission about the oval.

office, which was located where the vice principal's office is today.

During the refurbishments, the principal, Don Legge, secretary Pat Smith and staff had plenty of opportunities to demonstrate their flexibility. Alana O' Neil was a teacher at the school during this time.

"Our staffroom was the small office next to room 12 for several months. Recess was only 15 mins and it was a rush for everyone to get down to the staffroom and to the toilet during the break from around the school."

Once the new staffroom was completed, teachers were known to demonstrate their table tennis prowess during lunchtime competitions.

Back before the use of videos, schools ordered films from the State Library and classes would gather fortnightly to watch films related to class programs.

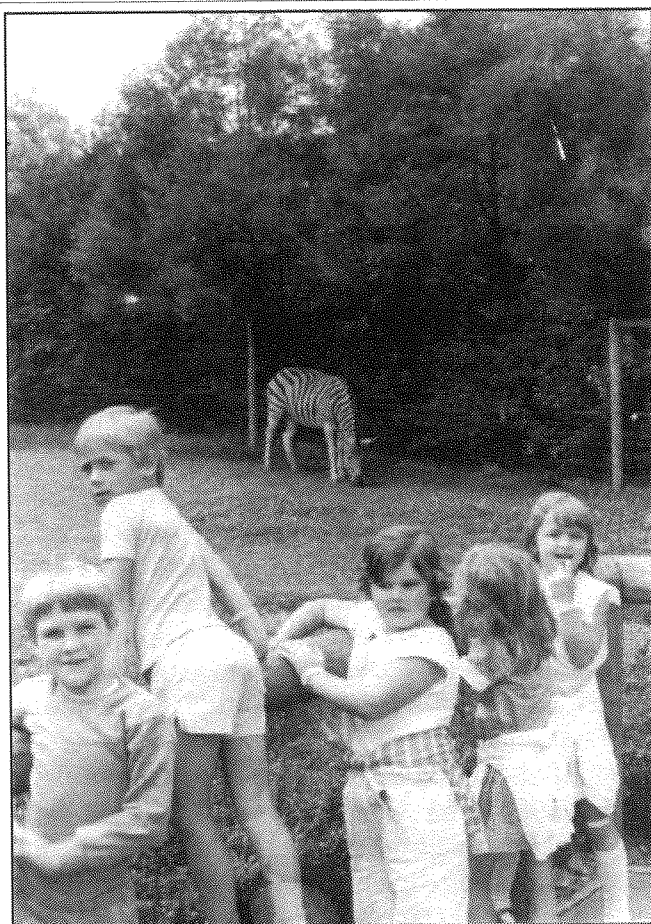
"The problem was that the films were requested at the start of term and often "substitutes" arrived or their descriptions in the catalogue did not match what appeared in the film. And there were some old classics that kept returning. A favourite was The Kite Story. I think we saw it about 20 times!" (Alana O'Neil)

In August 1983 regional grants were approved on a dollar for dollar basis. These were used for upgrading Rum-B-Run, carpeting classrooms and improving the adventure playground. There was some contention in the School Council over the allocation of funding to Rum-B-Run and the possibility of RUMBRAC fund raising was investigated. By September, activities such as roller skating nights, cookie drives, a raffle and a stall at the trash 'n' treasure had been organised. Ryan Parker recalls Rum-B-Run as his "best memory".

"It was a big hit. Were about six chosen at a time to go out with Ian Brew. You would let the goats and sheep out to roam for the day and then put them away at home-time."

Alana O'Neil recalls occasions, when Rum-B-Run was located next to classrooms four and six, when a goat would put its head in through the open windows. She has other memories of the animal inhabitants of Carrum Primary School.

"Four legged animals would roam around the oval/playground, eating plants, trees and would come up to kids in the yard and take food from their lunch boxes. Rum-B-Run had regular lunchtime activities with children being auctioneers selling all sorts of stuff."



Prep visit to the Melbourne Zoo, 1985.

Children built billy carts and took turns riding it around the schoolyard. There were often long queues. Elissa can remember the developments and extension of Rum-B-Run.

"They made it bigger and put the egg kiosk in"
In 1984, carpet was laid in rooms 3,4,5,6,7,8 and 11. In that same year, Mr. Ault, who had been working at the school for more than 20 years and contributed to its maintenance in so many ways, retired.

At the time...

- * Australian Prime Ministers: Malcolm Fraser (75-83); Robert Hawke (83-92)
- * 1988 Australian bicentennial celebrations
- * 1985 -Uluru handed back to traditional Aboriginal custodians
- * Awareness of environmental issues rose
- * Seatbelts for all car inhabitants became compulsory
- * Fax, answering machines, micro wave ovens, bar code scanners, video players became more common
- * New drugs developed enabled successful heart and other organ transplants
- * One dollar coin introduced in 1984
- * New Parliament House in Canberra (1988)